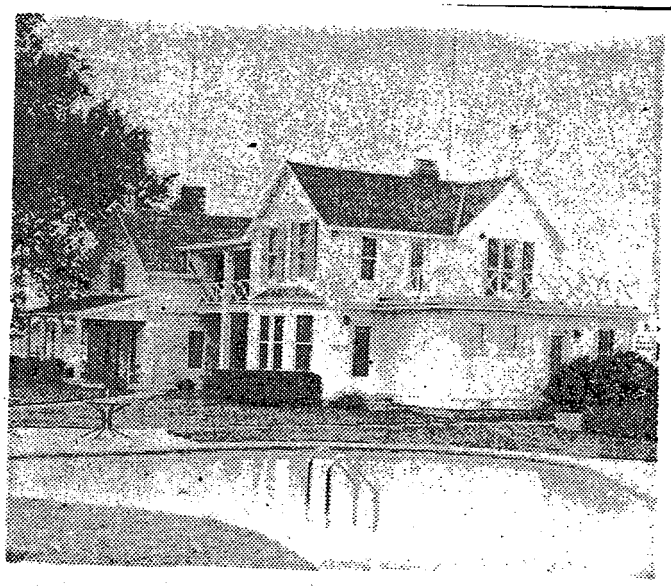

Associated Press Photo

Present to welcome guests at the BJ ranch near Johnson City, Texas, left, is ittle Beagle Johnson, one of President Johnson's dogs. The rambling stone and frame ranch house, right, is the nation's new summer White House.

'LBJ Ranch'—Nation's New Summer White House

JOHNSON CITY, Texas (AP)—A rambling 13-room stone farm ranch house on the banks of the Pedernales River near here is the nation's new summer White House.

"LBJ Ranch" reads the wrought-iron sign on the stone gate posts leading to the Texas home of President Johnson. Through the gate you see rolling green pastures dotted with fat, white-faced Hereford cattle. There are groves of live oak trees that were there when Johnson's grandfather built the original house 100 years ago.

In the past you could tell when Johnson was home because the flagpole beside the front yard swimming pool would carry the U. S. flag, the Texas flag and Johnson's personal flag, LBJ in white script on a blue background.

The entrance to the ranch grounds is over a low-water dam and roadway across the Pedernales that in flood times becomes impassable.

"I'll see you Saturday if the Lord is willing and the creeks don't rise," Mrs. Johnson often tells guests.

The ranch house is part native stone and part white frame. One of Johnson's aunts did all of her cooking over a mammoth fireplace that now is the living room. Four big bedrooms in the house and others in a nearby guest house take care of frequent guests. About 30 telephone lines to the ranch house attempted to take care of Johnson's official business when he was vice president.

Just outside Johnson's first-floor bedroom is a big, blue swimming pool with numerous telephone outlets around the edge. "Welcome to LBJ Ranch" is scratched in the concrete of a sidewalk outside the front gate. Concrete stepping stones around the pool carry signatures and greetings from famous figures who have visited the ranch.

Although 65 miles from the nearest city, Johnson keeps in close touch with the outside world. He rides in a car equipped with a mobile telephone. Electric golf carts scurry about the ranch carrying messengers. About 100 feet from the ranch back door are an airplane hangar and a landing strip that will accommodate all but large four-engine airliners.

An Extra R

Johnson likes to tell guests that the river's name, of Spanish origin, means "little white rocks shining in the night." Like most other central Texans, he puts an extra r in his pronunciation, making it sound "perdah-nallis." Water is piped from the river to irrigate lush pastures of coastal Bermuda grass in the 300 acres spread around the ranch house. Johnson also operates an 1,800-acre holding about 12 miles northwest of the ranch house.

The Johnson ranch is about 65 miles due west of Austin, the state capital and the nearest city of any size.

Johnson votes in Johnson City, population around 700, about 13 miles east of the ranch, and likes to tell that the community was named for his grandfather.

The President graduated from high school there.